

NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN THE NOVELS OF JANE AUSTEN

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A Thesis

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Drake University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English

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by

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August 1969

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## CHAPTER I

### AN INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting aspects of Jane Austen's novels is her use of the various narrative perspectives. Comments on Miss Austen's differing viewpoints range from Frank O'Connor's statement that the classic problem of point of view was magnificently solved by Jane Austen, who merely ignored it altogether,<sup>1</sup> to M. St. Francis Woods's statement in a recent dissertation that it is the skillful use of the narrative perspective which has largely made Jane Austen's story-telling a great art.<sup>2</sup>

A number of authors have incidentally concerned themselves with Miss Austen's narrative perspective; however, little seems to have been written on the progression of the type of narrative perspective employed throughout Miss Austen's career. It is the purpose of this study to examine her point of view as it reflects the brilliant choice of a dominant narrative perspective best suited to a specific work and as it reflects her maturation as an author.

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<sup>1</sup>Frank O'Connor, The Mirror in the Roadway (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Sister M. St. Francis Woods, "Jane Austen and the Omniscient Narrative Voice" (unpublished Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1965), p. 161.

The progression of the narrative perspective used by Miss Austen throughout her career may be viewed as parallel to the changing viewpoint used by novelists in general from the eighteenth century to the present. That is, the progression of the mode of narration throughout her novels presents in miniature the development from the early type of narration which included an omniscient narrator, many authorial intrusions, and numerous epigrammatic generalizations, through a stage where the omniscient narrator began to disappear as characters were viewed through a number of minds, to the dominant present mode of the unobtrusive, third-person limited narrator.

Concerning this change, Joseph Warren Beach states that in a bird's eye view of the English novel from Fielding to Ford, the most impressive factor is the disappearance of the author. He suggests that the authorial comment of Scott, Thackeray, Trollope, and Meredith scattered throughout the narrative tends to reduce the dramatic tension and the illusion of life, but "the fashion has changed; we like fiction unadulterated; we like the sense of taking part in an actual, a present experience, without the interference of authorial guide."<sup>1</sup> In The Rhetoric of Fiction, Wayne C.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), pp. 14-16.

Booth echoes this feeling with the statement that the form of artificial authority has been present in most narrative until recent times but is not generally found in a modern short story or novel.<sup>1</sup>

This change from the use of the artificial authority to the third-person limited narrator may be viewed in Miss Austen's works. In her earliest novels, the strong influences of her predecessors and contemporaries are evident as she follows the mode of presenting as her spokesman an obvious narrator who is superior to the characters.

In her intermediate writing period, Miss Austen curtails the authorial intrusions and begins the transition to a third-person limited narrator. In this transitional stage, Miss Austen limits the use of direct exposition by the narrator and substitutes instead the privilege of seeing into the minds of more than one character. The stage seems to manifest itself in Miss Austen's work as a point of view that shifts between two major characters. Although the presence of the author is less obvious in this stage, the shifting point of view still makes the presence of a superior controlling influence felt.

In her final writing period, Miss Austen goes one step further towards virtually eliminating authorial

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 4-6.

editorialism by restricting her narration to the mind of one character. Although the story is written from the viewpoint of one character, the "I" of first person is changed to the third person "she." This mode of presentation has the advantages of allowing the reader to feel that he is receiving the information objectively, yet allowing a feeling of immediacy.

This thesis proposes to examine three novels--one representative of each of these writing periods. Of Miss Austen's six major novels Northanger Abbey is generally considered to be her earliest work. Although it was written during the years 1797-1798 following the first versions of Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice, it is believed that the latter two were greatly altered in their revisions in 1809-1810 and 1810-1812, respectively,<sup>1</sup> whereas evidence indicates to the contrary concerning Northanger Abbey. In 1816 when Miss Austen wrote the advertisement by the authoress to Northanger Abbey, she stated:

This little work was finished in the year 1803, and intended for immediate publication. . . . The public are entreated to bear in mind that thirteen years have passed since it was finished, many more since it was begun, and that during that period, places, manners,<sup>2</sup> books, and opinions have undergone considerable changes.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Brimley Johnson, Jane Austen: Her Life, Her Work, Her Family, and Her Critics (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930), p. 273.

<sup>2</sup>R. W. Chapman (ed.), The Novels of Jane Austen (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), V, 12.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider this novel her earliest contribution.

Pride and Prejudice was originally conceived in 1796-1797 and titled First Impressions. It is believed, however, that the novel was substantially rewritten in 1812 before its publishment in 1813. In support of this belief, R. W. Chapman states that Pride and Prejudice had always seemed to him a book of greater maturity than credible if supposed to have been written when Miss Austen was twenty-one.<sup>1</sup> The fact that no apology for parts of the work made obsolete by the passage of time is offered also leads one to feel that the book was revised. Therefore, Pride and Prejudice will be examined as an example of Miss Austen's intermediate writing period.

Miss Austen's final novel, Persuasion, was begun in the summer or autumn of 1815, and the first draft was completed on July 18, 1816. Its publication was announced in December, 1817. This work will then be viewed as a product of Miss Austen's final writing period. In view of the above chronology, Northanger Abbey will be examined in Chapter II of this study, Pride and Prejudice in Chapter III, and Persuasion in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V will summarize conclusions suggested by this study.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 407.



## CHAPTER II

### NORTHANGER ABBEY

The most privileged of all Miss Austen's narrators appears in her first novel, Northanger Abbey. In this novel Miss Austen grants the narrator what Norman Friedman has termed "editorial omniscience." That is, the narrator, as a separate person from the characters, often dominates, and there are frequent generalizations, uses of "I," and direct addresses to the reader.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this mode of narration used in Miss Austen's first work may be partially attributed to imitation of widely read authors such as Fielding, in whose writing the author is present to

see that you are properly informed on all the circumstances of the action, to explain the characters to you and insure your forming the right opinion of them, to scatter nuggets of wisdom and good feeling along the course of the story, and to point out how, from the failures and successes of the characters, you may form a sane and right philosophy of conduct.<sup>2</sup>

Various critics have commented further on this early mode of narration. John K. Mathison notes that Northanger Abbey was written at the period in the author's career when

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," PMLA, LXX (December, 1955), 1169-1171.

<sup>2</sup>Beach, op. cit., p. 14.

explicit statements of intention as well as the effort to embody them closely were to be expected.<sup>1</sup> Ian Watt also comments on these explicit statements, saying that Miss Austen followed Richardson in providing minute presentations of daily life and Fielding in adopting a more detached attitude toward her narrative material and in evaluating it from a comic and objective point of view.<sup>2</sup> The use of the omniscient narrator facilitates the accomplishing of these purposes specified by Watt.

However, the main reason that this type of narrator was chosen is obviously that this personality is necessary to accomplish the two main purposes of the novel--literary burlesque and social and moral comment. As stated by Helen Sanders, adopting a burlesque tone and casting her story in the form of an anti-romance make an omnipotent and omniscient narrator inevitable.<sup>3</sup>

Catherine Moreland is presented as a naive, young girl progressing to maturity. The maturation involves learning to distinguish appearance from reality and fantasy from

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<sup>1</sup>John K. Mathison, "Northanger Abbey and Jane Austen's Conception of the Value of Fiction," ELH, XXIV (June, 1957), 139.

<sup>2</sup>Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 296.

<sup>3</sup>Helen Morse Sanders, "Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Narrative Method" (unpublished Dissertation, Syracuse University, New York, 1954), p. 16.

the real world; thus, the story demands a reliable narrator who can comment critically on Catherine's qualities, ridicule her romantic delusions and point out her successes and failures. This narrator then appears to be a reliable spokesman for Miss Austen's implied author and will hereafter be regarded as feminine in regard to Booth's comments that the implied author is an implied version of himself or a second self.<sup>1</sup>

Since the privileges granted the narrator are not consistent throughout the novel, the novel will be examined by parts. The book divides itself neatly into four sections. Section one, consisting of Chapters One through Five, is primarily concerned with the introduction and description of characters; section two, consisting of Chapters Six to Nineteen, relates the events of Catherine's stay at Bath; section three, consisting of Chapters Twenty to Twenty-eight, outlines the events at Northanger Abbey; and section four, consisting of Chapters Twenty-nine to Thirty-one, describes Catherine's return home. Generally, section one concentrates on direct exposition, section two concentrates on dialogue, section three comes closest to realizing Catherine as the central intelligence, and, finally, section four presents a return to direct exposition. Each of these four sections

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<sup>1</sup>Booth, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

will be examined for indications of the presence and privileges of the narrator as a separate personality.

Section one is very heavily weighted with narrator comment. The narrator reveals herself immediately as reliable and realistic as she objectively describes Catherine thereby ridiculing the romantic or Gothic novel, saying that no one would have supposed Catherine Moreland to be a heroine because her father was not addicted to locking up his daughter, her mother did not die bringing Catherine into the world, and there was nothing naturally heroic about her.<sup>1</sup> The plot thus contrived to continually travesty Mrs. Radcliffe was evidently Miss Austen's reaction to the pseudo-realism into which the novel had degenerated, especially in the 1780's and 1790's.

The narrator's dominance is further revealed as a very frank and detailed description of the heroine is presented. The narrator is allowed the privilege of looking into the past as she gives the reader a detailed commentary on Catherine at the age of ten (page 13). This is followed by a note about her at the age of fifteen in which the reader is told that her appearances were mending (pages 14-15). The narrator then

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<sup>1</sup>Chapman (ed.), op. cit., V, 13. All subsequent references to the text of Northanger Abbey refer to the first half of Volume V, Third Edition of this series edited by Chapman. For purposes of clarity chapters are referred to by numbers 1-31, rather than Volume I, Chapters 1-16 and Volume II, Chapters 1-16 as Chapman numbers them.

informs the reader that from the ages of fifteen to seventeen, Catherine was in training for a heroine and that she "read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventful lives." (page 15)

Still another dimension of the narrator's vision is revealed as she presents the reader with a résumé of the character of Catherine. She instructs that

her heart was affectionate, her disposition cheerful and open, without conceit or affectation. . . her person pleasing, and, when in good looks, pretty--and her mind about as ignorant and uninformed as the female mind at seventeen usually is. (page 18)

The narrator, besides having the freedom to disclose the past and the character of the heroine, also hints of Catherine's future, saying that although it is strange that Catherine has reached the age of seventeen having no lover to portray, "something must and will happen to throw a hero in her way." (page 17) Concerning this point, in "Critical Realism in Northanger Abbey" Alan McKillop notes that the narrator keeps saying that Catherine is not a romantic heroine and, therefore, things will not happen to her as they do in novels, yet she is a heroine and this is a novel after all. Thus the novelist interposes as in no other of her works.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alan D. McKillop, "Critical Realism in Northanger Abbey," Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, Ian Watt, editor (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 56.

Another detailed introduction by the narrator follows as she states, "It is now expedient to give some description of Mrs. Allen, that the reader may be able to judge, in what manner her actions will hereafter tend to promote the general distress of the work. . . ." (pages 19-20) Here the narrator again capitalizes on the opportunity to satirize the romance as she states that Mrs. Allen will probably, by jealousy, impudence or vulgarity, "contribute to reduce poor Catherine to all the desperate wretchedness of which a last volume is capable." (page 20) Similarly, Mrs. Thorpe is described by the narrator. The reader is informed that she is a widow, not rich, but a good-humored, well-meaning woman, and a very indulgent mother. (page 34) However, since Catherine is to be deceived by Mrs. Thorpe's daughter, Isabella, a description of the latter is noticeably lacking.

The narrator further displays her essential part in advancing the anti-romance as she describes Catherine's mother and sister. First she describes the maternal anxiety which would be expected of Catherine's mother in a romance and then shows the opposite to be true. It is stated that a thousand alarming presentiments of evil should oppress her heart and drown her in tears, and advice of an important nature, including cautions against such noblemen and baronets as delight in forcing young ladies away to remote farmhouses, should flow from her upon their parting. The reader is then informed

that actually Mrs. Morland's comments were confined to begging Catherine to wrap herself warm when coming from the rooms at night and to keep some account of money spent. (pages 18-19) The same method of satire is followed in the introduction of Catherine's sister; that is, the reader is shown that the sister's actions are not what would be expected upon bidding a heroine farewell. The romantic folly of oversensibility is here revealed as a favorite target for Miss Austen's satire.

In contrast to all the privileges Miss Austen assigns the narrator when Henry Tilney appears in Chapter Three, the narrator, in effect, disappears. Marvin Mudrick states that Henry is present in the novel to provide a non-committal running ironic commentary on the hypocrisy of social conventions. He is an ironic and detached spectator, always speaking to amuse, parry, lead on, instruct, or humble.<sup>1</sup> Thus instead of the narrator stating that certain questions would normally be asked of a heroine upon meeting her in Bath, Henry says,

I have hitherto been very remiss, madam, in the proper attentions of a partner here; I have not yet asked you how long you have been in Bath; whether you were ever here before; whether you have been at the Upper Rooms, the theatre, and the concert; and how you like the place altogether. (page 25)

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 43.

Henry also assumes the narrator's role in ridiculing the practice of keeping a journal, saying, "How are your various dresses to be remembered, and the particular state of your complexion, and curl of your hair to be described . . .without. . .a journal?" (page 27)

Similarly, the pronouncing of various generalizations is taken over by Henry as he generalizes that the style of letter writing among women is faultless except in three particulars, "a general deficiency of subject, a total inattention to stops, and a very frequent ignorance of grammar." (page 27) Henry Bonnell states that Jane Austen put into Tilney's mouth much of her satire on the large amount of didacticism of her time and thus his constant instructional comments.<sup>1</sup>

When Henry is present, there are no authorial intrusions. The only thoughts presented are those of Catherine, who becomes a type of central intelligence. Henry is not described by the narrator but introduced as Catherine envies him. "He seemed to be about four or five and twenty, was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very intelligent and lively eye, and, if not quite handsome, was very near it." (page 25) However, as soon as Henry exits, the

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<sup>1</sup>Henry H. Bonnell, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Jane Austen: Studies in Their Works (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1902), p. 407.



narrator reappears and comments that whether Catherine thought of Henry so much as to dream of him cannot be ascertained but "I hope it was no more than a slight slumber or a morning doze at most. . . ." (page 29) The use of the pronoun "I" by the narrator reaffirms her position here as a separate personality.

One of the extremely rare occurrences of the novel--the revealing of a character's thoughts other than Catherine's--appears in this section. It is stated that Mrs. Allen's keen eye made the discovery "that the lace on Mrs. Thorpe's pelisse was not half so handsome as that on her own." (page 32) It is only one sentence, yet it stands out in its inconsistency because Miss Austen through the entire novel generally grants the reader the privilege of knowing the thoughts of only one character.

The most obvious authorial comment appears in Chapter Five when Miss Austen presents what Reginald Farrer refers to as the "novelist's Magna Carta."<sup>1</sup> The narrator remarks that Isabella and Catherine would read novels together, and then the story is basically halted and a short essay on the value of novels follows:

I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number

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<sup>1</sup>Reginald Farrer, "Jane Austen," The Quarterly Review, CCXXIIX (July, 1917), 9.

of which they are themselves adding. . . . Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body. . . . there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them. (page 37)

The narrator then proclaims that the greatest powers of mind are displayed in some novels; ". . . the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language." (page 38) It appears that Miss Austen at this stage in her career either had not fully developed the talent of suggesting beliefs through the characters, or she did not trust her artistry enough to make her points without blunt statements; thus she uses the convenience of an editorially omniscient narrator to state her comments.

In section one, then, the presence of a separate narrator is often reinforced. Sixteen times the narrator uses the terms "heroine," "heroic," and "heroism"--usually in reference to Catherine. The narrator's presence is further reinforced as she makes numerous epigrammatic generalizations in connection with the story. These include such statements as ". . . what young lady of common gentility will reach the age of sixteen without altering her name as far as she can?" (page 19) and "Friendship is certainly the finest balm for the pangs of disappointed love." (page 33)

In contrast to the emphasis on direct narrator comment in section one, section two is held together by its predominant use of the mimetic mode of speech. Whereas only three instances of mimetic speech occur in section one, section two is comprised of thirty-three dialogues connected by brief passages of exposition.<sup>1</sup> Thus the role of the narrator is reduced but still quite important in comparison to its use in Miss Austen's later novels. The narrator's duties in this section seem to be primarily to set the scene, to provide comic irony, to state generalizations, to explain characters' inadequacies, and to satirize the romance.

Considering the first of these duties, setting the stage, one can notice that, in this early stage of her career, Miss Austen often uses the convenience of having the narrator set the scene at the beginning of a chapter; thus, a number of chapters, including Chapters Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Thirteen, and Fourteen, begin with the direct comment of the narrator. In the opening of Chapter Thirteen, for example, the narrator states, "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday have now passed in review before the reader; . . . and the pangs of Sunday only now remain to be described. . . ." (page 97) This sentence further demonstrates the narrator's control of time which again emphasizes her presence.

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<sup>1</sup>Woods, op. cit., p. 38.

The second duty, providing comic irony, is also accomplished often in this section. As Farrer states, Jane Austen loves to have her heroine taken in either by herself or someone else so that the author and reader can enjoy a private smile together.<sup>1</sup> This is exemplified as Catherine and Isabella discuss how glad they are to get rid of two gentlemen who seem to be following them. The narrator then states, ". . . to shew the independence of Miss Thorpe and her resolution of humbling the sex, they set off immediately as fast as they could walk in pursuit of the two young men." (page 43) In the following chapter, the narrator makes another ironic comment that could not be revealed through Catherine because of her imperceptiveness:

. . . so pure and uncoquettish were her [Isabella's] feelings, that though they overtook and passed the two offending young men in Milsom-street, she was so far from seeking to attract their notice, that she looked back at them only three times. (page 47)

Considering the narrator's third duty, that of stating generalizations, one can notice two other extended personal outbreaks similar to the one on novels in Chapter Five, where the narrator appeals directly to the reader. The first of these appears in Chapter Ten as the narrator states that what head-dress Catherine should wear became her chief concern and then says:

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<sup>1</sup>Farrer, op. cit., p. 19.

She cannot be justified in it. Dress is at all times a frivolous distinction and excessive solicitude about it often destroys its own aim. . . . It would be mortifying to the feelings of many ladies could they be made to understand how little the heart of man is affected by what is costly or new in their attire. . . . No man will admire her the more, no woman will like her the better for it. (pages 73-74)

In Jane Austen: The Six Novels, W. A. Craik comments that Jane Austen can make the most commonplace topic reveal the discussion of personal principles and social and moral conduct which he claims is at the heart of all of her novels.<sup>1</sup> This is what seems to transpire here as the mere mention of dress awakens this resounding response from the narrator.

The other extended outbreak occurs in Chapter Fourteen when the narrator states that Catherine was heartily ashamed of her ignorance and then comments:

A misplaced shame. When people wish to attach, they should always be ignorant. To come with a well-informed mind, is to come with an inability of administering to the vanity of others, which a sensible person would always wish to avoid. A woman especially, if she have the misfortune of knowing anything should conceal it as well as she can. . . . (pages 110-111)

Besides allowing an outlet for her social and moral comment, Miss Austen appears to be satirizing the didacticism of various novels as she has the narrator address the reader directly in an instructive manner.

The narrator states several other generalizations such as "where youth and diffidence are united, it requires

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<sup>1</sup>W. A. Craik, Jane Austen: The Six Novels (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1965), p. 31.

uncommon steadiness of reason to resist the attraction of being called the most charming girl in the world" (page 50), and ". . . every young lady has at some time or other known the same agitation" (page 62); however, she does not elaborate on them.

Several other generalizations in this section present a preview of the later works of Miss Austen as they are not stated explicitly by the narrator but rather presented implicitly as a part of the story as they are deduced by the heroine or central intelligence. For example, upon having to refuse Mr. Tilney's offer to dance because she went engaged to the ball, Catherine "deduced this useful lesson, that to go previously engaged to a ball does not necessarily increase either the dignity or enjoyment of a young lady." (page 55)

Another duty which the narrator must perform in this section is explaining Catherine's actions or inadequacies. When Catherine's brother and Isabella are introduced, the reader is informed that Catherine might have known "had she been more expert in the development of other people's feelings. . . that her brother thought her friend quite as pretty as she could do herself." (page 45) Again, when John speaks of the carriage as being both safe and unsafe in the same breath, the reader is instructed that Catherine did not know how to reconcile two such very different accounts of the same

thing for "she had not been brought up to understand the propensities of a rattle nor to know to how many idle assertions and impudent falsehoods the excess of vanity will lead." (page 65)

Finally, the narrator's duty of providing literary burlesque of the romantic novel may be seen in her voicing of romantic conventions or clichés. When Catherine feels the disappointment of wanting a dancing partner, the narrator comments,

To be disgraced in the eye of the world, to wear the appearance of infamy while her heart is all purity, her actions all innocence and the misconduct of another the true source of her debasement, is one of those circumstances which peculiarly belong to the heroine's life and her fortitude under it what particularly dignifies her character. Catherine had fortitude too; she suffered, but no murmur passed her lips. (page 53)

The reader is also told that Catherine, upon seeing Henry with a young woman, immediately guesses her to be his sister, "unthinkingly throwing away a fair opportunity of considering him lost to her forever by being married already." Consequently, Catherine does not turn to "a deathlike paleness" and fall in "a fit on Mrs. Allen's bosom." (page 53)

Another romantic cliché, that of the tearful lovelorn heroine, is presented as the narrator says, at the time that Catherine is disappointed because she missed the outing with the Tilneys, "And now I may dismiss my heroine to the sleepless couch, which is the true heroine's portion; to a pillow strewn with thorns and wet with tears." (page 90) Furthermore, Isabella states that James would still be her choice

even if she had the command of millions or were mistress of the whole world. This romantic cliché is emphasized as the reader is told that it recalls to Catherine's mind all the heroines of her acquaintance. (page 119)

Still another example of the literary burlesque for which the editorially omniscient narrator is needed occurs when Catherine meets Henry's brother and the narrator comments that the brother's admiration for Catherine was not of the kind likely

. . . to produce animosities between the brothers or persecutions to the lady. He cannot be the instigator of the three villains in the horseman's great coats by whom she will hereafter be forced into a travelling-chaise and four, which will drive off with incredible speed. (page 131)

In this manner Miss Austen often mocks the excessive sensibility and unrealistic qualities of the Gothic fiction so popular in the 1780's and 1790's and in so doing adds a great deal of humor to her presentation.

The gradual move more and more into Catherine's consciousness in section two is evidenced by the large number of passages in this section relating the thoughts of Catherine and emphasized by several comments that Catherine did not hear a conversation, and thus it is not related. For example, when Catherine, James, Isabella, and John are riding in the carriage, "this brought on a dialogue of civilities between the other two; but Catherine heard neither the particulars nor the result" (page 48), and, therefore, the subject is dropped.



Dialogue is again halted as Catherine's remark that she is sure James does not drink much brought on "a loud and overpowering reply of which no part was very distinct." (page 64)

A preview of another technique Miss Austen uses more extensively in her later works to avoid the necessity of a narrator, having the central intelligence character give the third-person version of another character's speech, is presented in this section as Isabella's words are revealed as passing through Catherine's consciousness:

She was sure her dearest sweetest Catherine would not seriously refuse such a trifling request to a friend who loved her so dearly. She knew her beloved Catherine to have so feeling a heart, so sweet a temper to be so easily persuaded by those she loved. (page 98)

This technique allows Miss Austen to emphasize the importance of her heroine, whose maturation is to be displayed in the novel, and minimize the roles of the narrator and other characters.

In section three, this concentration on the consciousness of Catherine becomes the strongest as Miss Austen comes closest to using the type of third-person limited narration which dominates in her later novels. There are ten brief dialogues, and the rest of the narration is presented as the thoughts of Catherine. There are no instances of thoughts of other characters being revealed, and none of the narration

presented encompasses material which could not be accepted as viewed or thought by Catherine (with the possible exception of a statement that the clock struck twelve and Catherine had been asleep one-half hour). (page 189)

In this section the parody of the Gothic novel is the strongest as this section of Northanger Abbey becomes a miniature Gothic novel and Catherine becomes the Gothic heroine. Therefore, a narrator who would explain Catherine's shortcomings or oversights or who would relate thoughts of others would ruin the suspense. The reader must be exposed only to Catherine's point of view in order to realize how Catherine could possibly be deceived and misled by false evidences. The narrator is also no longer needed to point out the absurdity of imagination over reason as this finally is done by Henry and emphasized by Catherine's own developing sense of reason.

The narrator is also no longer essential for character delineation as Catherine's maturation, which is at the heart of the novel, is revealed through her thoughts and actions. For example, when she discovers that the important paper found in the cabinet is only an inventory of linen, she feels "humbled to the dust. . . . Nothing could now be clearer than the absurdity of her recent fancies." (page 173)

However, Catherine at this point has not quite learned to judge between the two sets of values--the reality as

evidenced by fiction which is propounded by the Thorpes and the reality as evidenced by the real world suggested by the Tilneys. Thus, although she thinks that her fancy could not again mislead her, she proceeds to construct an outrageous atrocity whereby she believes Mrs. Tilney to have been locked up and fed by the pitiless hands of General Tilney for the past nine years. When the outrageousness of her imagination is proved to her, the narrator is not needed to inform the reader of this, for Catherine, now possessing more reason or common sense, thinks:

. . . nothing could shortly be clearer than that it has been all a voluntary, self-created delusion, each trifling receiving importance from an imagination resolved on alarm, and everything forced to bend to one purpose by a mind which, before she entered the abbey had been craving to be frightened. . . . it seemed as if the whole might be traced to the influence of that sort of reading which she had there [at Bath] indulged. (pages 199-200)

D. W. Harding notes that Catherine throws off these delusions almost as something external to herself.<sup>1</sup> This seems true as she then realizes that, as charming as Mrs. Radcliffe's works were, perhaps she did not depict human nature as it exists in the midland counties of England. She further resolves to always judge and act in the future with the greatest good sense. (pages 200-201)

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<sup>1</sup>D. W. Harding, "Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen," Scrutiny, VIII (March, 1940), 356.

Catherine further displays her maturation when she receives the letter from Isabella asking her to convince James that he is the only man she did or could love. An outside narrator is again not necessary as Catherine's reason immediately penetrates Isabella's façade as she realizes that the letter is but a shallow artifice. (page 218) Thus the pattern discussed by Frank Kearful as being present in all of Jane Austen's works is revealed. That is, a young girl, who is immature in some important way, has undergone several experiences which have led to discoveries about herself and others which together have brought about a new orientation of the heroine to her environment.<sup>1</sup> This maturation then signals the end of the need for a separate narrator to explain these things that the immature, imperceptive Catherine was unable to comprehend.

Henry is most essential in promoting this maturation, and he seems to serve as the narrator's stand-in. That is, it is through Henry that Catherine's presentiments about an abbey are revealed as he asks her whether she is prepared to encounter all the horrors that an abbey may produce. He then proceeds to playfully describe what usually happens to a young lady who is introduced into a dwelling of this kind. Only after Henry rebukes Catherine for her construction of the

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<sup>1</sup>Frank J. Kearful, "Satire and the Form of the Novel: The Problems of Aesthetic Unity in Northanger Abbey," ELH, XXXII (December, 1965), 517.

atrocities concerning General Tilney does she realize that her craving to be frightened has caused her all her terror. This rebuking then is the other major incident in this section where Henry replaces the narrator. He urges Catherine to consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions she has entertained and to remember that they are English and are Christians. "Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you. . . ." (page 197)

In his discussion of The Fabric of Dialogue in Miss Austen's novels, Howard Babb comments that Henry at Bath aims at educating Catherine as to the nature of society, so at the abbey he enlightens her about herself.<sup>1</sup> This is evident as the reader is then informed that Catherine's visions of romance were over and that Henry's address had "thoroughly opened her eyes to the extravagance of her late fancies." (page 199) Henry is qualified to act as Catherine's instructor as he makes an ideal foil for Catherine, the two representing "irony and straightforwardness, sophistication and naivete, confidence and timidity, and information and ignorance."<sup>2</sup>

This section then most clearly foreshadows the type of character delineation which Miss Austen used to a greater

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<sup>1</sup>Howard S. Babb, Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Mudrick, op. cit., p. 50.

extent in her later novels. This consists primarily of revealing dialogue and the thoughts of one character rather than authorial comment.

This type of character development without the use of authorial comment is also used in the revealing of General Tilney, Eleanor and Isabella. General Tilney's concern for the materialistic is revealed as he continually emphasizes the outstanding elements of the abbey and asks Catherine leading questions concerning the elegance of her home. On this issue, William Marshall notes that although many reasonable people in Miss Austen's novels are rewarded for their goodness by wealth and success in society, they do not necessarily imply virtue.<sup>1</sup> In General Tilney this becomes obvious as his materialistic behavior is then climaxed by his rejection of Catherine when he discovers that she is not wealthy.

Similarly, Eleanor's sincere love and concern for Catherine is revealed largely as she is required by General Tilney to inform Catherine that she must leave. She stresses that she is indeed a most unwilling messenger and that no displeasure, no resentment that Catherine can feel at the sudden ordered departure can be more than what Eleanor herself feels. She then asks Catherine to write and let her

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<sup>1</sup>William H. Marshall, The World of the Victorian Novel (South Brunswick: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1967), pp. 55-57.

know that she arrived home safely even though she knows that this request is against her father's wishes. (pages 223-228)

Finally, Isabella is another character who is well portrayed without direct authorial intrusions. As Sanders suggests, every time Isabella opens her mouth the reader sees her as a man-chasing illiterate whose extravagances and inadequacies of language betray her vulgarity, but Catherine originally does not see this at all.<sup>1</sup> Her façade is finally penetrated by Catherine through the letters of James and Isabella and again with the instructive help of Henry. Henry aids this penetration by stating that she will probably be very constant until a baronet comes her way. This helps Catherine realize the ambition involved in Isabella's actions. As suggested by Mudrick, Isabella becomes the heroine's confidante in reverse: "sensibility into vulgarity, sympathy into egocentrism, chastity into man-chasing, and thoughtfulness into frivolity."<sup>2</sup>

In section four the narrator again becomes very prominent as over one-half of this section is direct narrator comment. The narrator's duties include continuing the satire on the romance, making generalizations, and explaining the denouement.

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<sup>1</sup>Sanders, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup>Mudrick, op. cit., p. 47.

The anti-romance elements of the story are once again stressed as it is stated that a heroine's return to her native village as a countess with waiting maids is a subject upon which authors like to dwell, but, says this particular author, ". . . my affair is widely different; I bring back my heroine to her home in solitude and disgrace. . . ."

(page 232) The narrator's position is further stressed as she refers to the "humiliation of her [Catherine's] biographer." (page 233)

Generalizations propounded by the narrator are again present in this section. She remarks that Catherine's parents, upon seeing Catherine's ill looks and agitation, "never once thought of her heart, for which the parents of a young lady of seventeen just returned from her first excursion from home was odd enough!" (page 235) Similarly, when Catherine's mother attempts to impress upon her the importance of having preserved the affection of earlier friends, the narrator generalizes, ". . . there are some situations of the human mind in which good sense has very little power. . . ."

(page 239)

Finally much of the last chapter is spent in direct explanation of the denouement. A very rare event occurs in the denouement as, for the first time in the novel, Catherine is revealed through another character's thoughts. The reader is informed that Mrs. Morland watched Catherine's relapse and



saw the "full proof of that repining spirit to which she had now begun to attribute her want of cheerfulness.

. . ." (page 241) Mrs. Morland then leaves the room to get a book which she believes will help Catherine, and, curiously, the reader goes with her as it is stated that it took a while before she could find what she was looking for, and other family matters occurred to detain her. Fifteen minutes later when she returns to Catherine, she finds Henry there. (page 241)

Various critics have attributed this type of occurrence to Miss Austen's inability to deal with a couple encountering a serious romantic situation. It is interesting to note that Miss Austen in a letter in 1814 encourages a fellow author not to have her hero propose in the third person, "I do not like a lover speaking in the third person; it is too much like the formal part of Lord Orville /in Evelina /and, I think, is not natural."<sup>1</sup> Yet here in Northanger Abbey, which was probably written about seventeen years before this statement, Henry's proposal appears, "Such was the permission upon which he had now offered her his hand." (page 244)

Miss Austen again conveniently uses the narrator to avoid lengthy dialogue as she allows her to summarize the

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<sup>1</sup>William Austen-Leigh and Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh, Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters (second edition; New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 354.

feelings and actions of General Tilney and then explain:

I leave it to my reader's sagacity to determine how much of all this it was possible for Henry to communicate at this time to Catherine, how much of it he could have learnt from his father, in what points his own conjectures might assist him, and what portion must yet remain to be told in a letter from James, I have united for their ease what they must divide for mine. (page 247)

With two pages remaining, the narrator continues the summary, noting that the readers cannot be anxious about the conclusion because they may see in the "tell-tale compression of pages before them, that we are all hastening together to perfect felicity." (page 250) The narrator's presence is further stressed as she states concerning Eleanor's marriage that she is aware that the rules of composition forbid the introduction of a character not connected with her fable. This type of sudden felicity gained without foreshadowing which requires justification by the narrator marks this as the work of a novice and is not to be witnessed in Miss Austen's later works.

In the final sentence, McKillop suggests that Miss Austen offers to make a playful truce with the strictly didactic novel.<sup>1</sup> She cleverly puts the burden of abstracting the moral lesson upon the reader, stating ". . . I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience." (page 252)

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<sup>1</sup> McKillop, op. cit., p. 61.

It appears that Miss Austen's success, given the task she has set out to accomplish in this novel, is remarkable. If her main purposes were, in fact, literary burlesque and social and moral comment, it is obvious that her goals are achieved. The horror-laden, over-drawn, cliché-ridden Gothic novel which threatened to supersede realistic fiction is mercilessly ridiculed while the implied author clearly emerges against greed, selfishness, and vulgarity, and on the side of truth, moderation, and sincerity.

However, the novel, because of its purposes, subject matter and novice author, leaves much to be desired in the areas of character delineation and the creation of the illusion of reality. The characters in Northanger Abbey are drawn quite sketchily as the author restricts herself largely to the mind of a young, naive, imperceptive central intelligence. Only once throughout the novel does the reader see a character through the thoughts of another.

Some critics have attacked the entire method of using an omniscient narrator, as Percy Lubbock does saying that it is the easiest way and that he has not discovered anyone who can proceed in this fashion without giving up advantages of a better method.<sup>1</sup> However, in this novel the purpose of satire justifies and makes essential the omniscient observer. In using this mode, Miss Austen sacrifices the illusion of reality, the feeling of immediacy, and the general closeness

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<sup>1</sup>Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 263.

of the reader to the story. Most of the characters are introduced not by their actions, words, or thoughts, but rather by a few words of direct exposition by the narrator. Generalizations or "lectures," although necessary for the satire, often stand out as being unnecessary and illusion-shattering. For example, when Catherine enters the cotillion ball, the narration proceeds as filtering through Catherine's mind. The reader is informed that she is anxiously avoiding Thorpe's sight and her wishes, hopes, and plans center in Tilney's asking her to dance. The narrator then breaks in with the comment, "Every young lady may feel for my heroine in this critical moment, for every young lady has at some time or other known the same agitation." (page 74) This seems to destroy the mounting empathy which the reader had with the character.

The desires for improved character delineation, immediacy, and illusion of reality are, however, to be realized in Miss Austen's more mature novels, as remains to be seen in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER III

### PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

In Miss Austen's third novel, Pride and Prejudice, published in 1813, the minimizing of the role of the narrator is readily discernible as Miss Austen makes the narrator's appearances less obvious and less frequent. Also, the narrator acts not as an interpreter but merely as an objective reporter. Reginald Farrer states that to such readers who believe in frequent appearances of the author and seem to want their "pabulum already peptonised," Miss Austen avoids appeal. She is there all the time but rarely in propria persona.<sup>1</sup> In Jane Austen: The Six Novels, W. A. Craik echoes this feeling with the comment that Jane Austen herself appears as a lively commentator in Pride and Prejudice only to present material which cannot be revealed through Elizabeth.<sup>2</sup> No longer are the characters referred to as "hero" and "heroine" as the narrator does not appear as an author commenting on characters which she has created, as she did in Northanger Abbey, but merely as an uninvolved commentator.

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<sup>1</sup>Reginald Farrer, "Jane Austen," The Quarterly Review, CCXXIIX (July, 1917), 4.

<sup>2</sup>W. A. Craik, Jane Austen: The Six Novels (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1965), p. 62.

Since the mimetic mode of narration is the primary one used in Pride and Prejudice, the narrator's most prevalent role within the novel seems to be merely to set the stage for the dialogue. Therefore in many of the chapters, as was true in Northanger Abbey, the narrator is present only at the beginning of a chapter. Thus, in the first two sentences the stage is set by a generalization made by the narrator:

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.<sup>1</sup>

Following this setting of the stage, the narrator, in effect, disappears as Mr. and Mrs. Bennet proceed to reveal themselves and their family through conversation.

Chapters Two and Ten present similar examples of the narrator setting the stage. Chapter Two begins with the statement that Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley and that until the evening after the visit, his wife had no knowledge of it. The narrator states, "It was then disclosed in the following manner." (page 6) Similarly, Chapter Ten opens with the statement that the day passed much as the day before had. Elizabeth

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<sup>1</sup>R. W. Chapman (ed.), The Novels of Jane Austen (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), II, 3. All subsequent references to the text of Pride and Prejudice refer to Volume II, Third Edition of this series edited by Chapman.

joined the party in the drawing-room where Miss Bingley was seated near Mr. Darcy commending his handwriting. (page 41) Dialogue again follows as the predominance of the mimetic mode is again displayed.

Another privilege of the narrator which is frequently exposed through the novel is that of summarization. For example, when the Lucases are introduced, Sir William Lucas's success is summarized. Mr. Bennet's economical situation is likewise summarized by the narrator.

In addition to these rather thorough summaries, the narrator often concludes a chapter with just a summarizing statement. For example, Chapter Two concludes with the statement that the rest of the evening was spent in conjecturing how soon Bingley would return Mr. Bennet's visit and when they should ask him to dinner. (page 8) Another instance of this occurs at the conclusion of Chapter Six when Miss Bingley is ridiculing Elizabeth for her admiration of Darcy: "He listened to her with perfect indifference, . . . her wit flowed long." (page 27)

In the same manner, in the final chapter of the novel the narrator presents an epilogue in which she summarizes events of the major characters. She tells the reader that Mrs. Bennet was very happy on the day she "got rid of her two most deserving daughters" (page 385), and that she afterwards visited Mrs. Bingley and talked of Mrs. Darcy with

delighted pride. The narrator's presence is emphasized in this summarization as it is the only time in the novel where she refers to herself in the first person. Continuing her statement on Mrs. Bennet, she comments:

I wish I could say, for the sake of her family, that the accomplishment of her earnest desire in the establishment of so many of her children, produced so happy an effect as to make her a sensible, amiable, well-informed woman for the rest of her life; though perhaps it was lucky for her husband, who might not have relished domestic felicity in so unusual a form, that she still was occasionally nervous and invariably silly. (page 385)

The narrator's summary continues as she states that Mr. Bennet missed Elizabeth exceedingly and delighted in going to Pemberley and that after a year, Jane and Bingley, finding that life so near her relatives was not desirable, moved to a place near Derbyshire. Kitty spent much time with her two elder sisters and became less irritable, less ignorant, and less insipid, while Mary, who remained at home, was more obliged to mix with the world and could still moralize over every morning visit. (pages 385-386) The reader is further told that Lydia and Wickham were always moving from place to place in quest of a cheap situation and always spending more than they ought. His affection for her soon sank into indifference; hers lasted a little longer. Of the other minor characters the reader is informed that Miss Bingley was mortified by the marriage and Lady Catherine was extremely indignant, but in time resentment was dropped. The Gardiners,



on the other hand, were great friends of Elizabeth and Darcy, and Georgiana made Pemberley her home and had "the highest opinion in the world of Elizabeth." (pages 386-388)

This epilogue approach used by Miss Austen seems to reflect a following of what she regarded as a "rule" of novel construction that the conclusion must bring about felicity and that it should leave no loose ends but should inform the reader concerning what effects the major events of the novel had on the future lives of the major characters.

The narrator's summarizing privilege is also evidenced in her allowing of the passage of time. A number of times throughout the novel the narrator, wishing to move on to a particular scene, allows an extended period of time to elapse with a mere sentence. Examples of this are the following: "Four weeks passed away. . ." (page 147), "With no greater events than these in the Longbourn family. . . did January and February pass away" (page 151), and "The first week of their return was soon gone." (page 229)

The narrator's presence is also emphasized by a few very rare references to the story as a creation of the author. When Mrs. Gardiner cautions Elizabeth about Wickham, the narrator compliments the discussion as "a wonderful instance of advice being given on such a point, without begin resented." Later in the story, the novel is once again referred to directly as it is stated, "it is not the object of this work

to give a description of Derbyshire, nor of any of the remarkable places through which their route thither lay.

. . . " Helen Sanders comments that Miss Austen here shows signs of growing irritated with having to sustain illusion when she wants to be getting on with her story.<sup>1</sup> This type of intrusion seems to cause some loss of immediacy; however, the frequency of this type of comment is reduced so much as compared with Northanger Abbey as to be almost negligible.

Another privilege exercised occasionally by the narrator is that of character description. The descriptions by the narrator, however, are handled much more subtly than they were in Northanger Abbey. Rather than having the narrator comment immediately when a character appears, Miss Austen often allows the reader to observe the character in conversation and then she has the narrator substantiate impressions that the reader has already gleaned from the scene. An example of this is viewed in the first chapter as Mr. and Mrs. Bennet<sup>3</sup> reveal much about themselves through their conversation. The narrator then follows this with information, most of which has already been deduced by the observant reader. Mr. Bennet is declared to be an odd mixture of sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice while Mrs.

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Morse Sanders, "Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Narrative Method" (unpublished Dissertation, Syracuse University, New York, 1954), p. 16.

Bennet is described as a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper whose business is to get her daughters married. (page 51)

Bingley and Darcy are also introduced with a few comments by the narrator. She informs the reader that Bingley is "good looking and gentlemanlike" and has "a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners." (page 10) She further states that Darcy drew attention by "his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien. . . ." (page 10) She carefully avoids personally condemning Darcy by stating, "his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased. . . ." (page 10) The reader is then encouraged to view the ensuing comments and actions of Darcy in this light; however, the narrator has not committed herself to this viewpoint. Bingley and Darcy are further delineated by a description of their friendship.

Elizabeth and Jane are also delineated with very little narrator comment. Another subtle technique of character description is exemplified by the delineation of Elizabeth. Information is related in small amounts at various times which not only makes the narrator's description less obvious but also strengthens the illusion of reality by letting the reader get to know the character gradually. Concerning Elizabeth, the narrator states, ". . . she had a

lively, playful disposition. . . ." (page 12), and she possessed "more quickness of observation and less pliancy of temper than her sister." (page 15) Nothing similar to the extended description of the childhood and disposition of the heroine of Northanger Abbey is presented as most of the character delineation is handled through the revelation of her actions, comments, and thoughts. The narrator is also not needed to introduce Jane since this is handled through conversation. She is declared by Darcy to be the only handsome girl in the room (page 4), and Elizabeth reveals her most essential characteristic with the statement to her, ". . . you are a great deal too apt you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in any body." (page 14)

The other three Bennet sisters also require little introduction by the narrator as their characteristics are readily discernible by their speech and actions. The narrator comments only that Catherine's and Lydia's minds are more vacant than their sisters' (page 28), and that Mary is the only plain one in the family who, having neither genius nor taste, has worked hard for knowledge and accomplishments. (pages 25 and 28)

The next characters to be introduced by the narrator are Wickham and Collins. As was the case with Darcy, the narrator does not commit herself to a statement on the

character of Wickham. She only describes him physically, saying that his appearance was greatly in his favor and that "he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and a very pleasing address." (page 72) A reliable description of the true character of either Darcy or Wickham upon his introduction would have served to destroy the author's intentional temporary misleading of the reader. Mr. Collins, on the other hand, is described by a series of short comments by the narrator. She states that he was a tall, heavy-looking man of twenty-five whose air was grave and stately and whose manners were very formal (page 64), he was not a sensible man (page 70), he thought too well of himself (page 117), and he was by nature favored with stupidity. (page 122)

The Lucases, Phillips, Gardiners, and Georgiana Darcy are commented on briefly by the narrator, but they are then delineated almost entirely by their speech, actions, and other people's reactions to them. By the time the three ladies at Rosings are introduced, Elizabeth has basically assumed the narrator's role; therefore, they are presented through her observations without the aid of a separate narrator.

The many direct descriptions presented by the narrator in the novel again seem to indicate that Miss Austen, at this stage of her career, either had not fully developed the

talent of suggesting these things through dialogue or did not trust her artistry enough or perhaps had just not yet broken away from the established patterns of novel writing.

The improved technique in character delineation is demonstrated by the fact that many of the characters are prepared for not by narrator comment but through conversation about them before they appear in the novel. Thus, the appearance of the Bennet daughters is prefaced by a discussion by Mr. and Mrs. Bennet concerning their children; Bingley's appearance is prefaced by several extended speculations about him in the two preceding chapters; and Lady Catherine de Bourgh is mentioned a number of times by Collins, Wickham, and Charlotte before she appears. Collins's appearance is likewise prefaced by a letter which, in turn stimulates much discussion about him. Through this technique he, too, is subtly revealed without narrator comment.

On the other hand, discussion about Darcy and Wickham before their first appearance is noticeably lacking. This allows Miss Austen to employ ambiguity in her treatment of them. This then enables her to prejudice the reader for Wickham and against Darcy because the reader's judgments must be based on their first appearance rather than any previous knowledge of their character.

The narrator is also not as necessary in this novel for expressing numerous epigrammatic generalizations as she was in

Northanger Abbey. This role is assumed in Pride and Prejudice by the characters, particularly Mary. Upon her first appearance, Mary generalizes that pride is very common and that human nature is particularly prone to it. (page 20) The next time that she appears in the novel she comments, ". . . every impulse of feeling should be guided by reason; and . . . exertion should always be in proportion to what is required." (page 32) She further generalizes, "Society has claims on all. . . ." (page 87), and ". . . we must stem the tide of malice, and pour into the wounded bosoms of each other, the balm of sisterly consolation." (page 289) She then consoles herself with the moral extraction:

Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson; that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable--that one false step involves her in endless ruin--that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful,--and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behaviour towards the undeserving of the other sex. (page 289)

In contrast to Mary's gravely-stated moral extractions, the generalizations stated by Elizabeth are generally light, humorous, and occasionally ironic. Upon being asked to sing, Elizabeth remarks that there is a fine old saying--"Keep your breath to cool your porridge." Later, as Mr. Wickham's attentions to a Miss King are discussed, Elizabeth's speech savours strongly of disappointment as she proclaims, "Stupid men are the only ones worth knowing after all." (page 154) Finally, when rebuked by Jane for attempting

to persuade her that she feels more for Bingley than she acknowledges, Elizabeth states, "We all love to instruct, though we can teach only what is not worth knowing."  
(page 343)

Charlotte and Collins also add a few generalizations which serve primarily to reveal more about them. Charlotte states, "If a woman conceals her affection . . . from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him; and it will then be but poor consolation to believe the world equally in the dark" (page 21), and, later, "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance." (page 23) An example of a generalization stated by Collins occurs as he proclaims, "Resignation to inevitable evils is the duty of us all." (page 114)

Thus a separate narrator is not as necessary for the generalizations Miss Austen includes in Pride and Prejudice as she was in Northanger Abbey. This seems to be an improvement in her art since allowing the generalizations to appear implicitly as part of the story rather than explicitly as editorial comment by a narrator grants continuity to the story and improves the illusion of reality by avoiding the intrusion of an outside narrator.

However, the primary reason that the narrator does not need to be present in propria persona in Pride and Prejudice is that the narrator's role is largely taken over by Elizabeth.



Although Elizabeth is not as reliable as Henry Tilney in Northanger Abbey, she does display an alert and perceptive mind even when she is partially blinded by her prejudice.

It is in the discussion of the Bingley sisters in Chapter Four that Elizabeth begins to emerge as the character through whom the story is told. She is the first person whose thoughts are revealed as the reader is informed that she was very little disposed to approve of the Bingley sisters. (page 15) Throughout the novel, then, an increasing amount of the material is presented by revealing the thoughts of Elizabeth just as an increasing amount was presented from Catherine Morland's point of view in Northanger Abbey. The narration, therefore, gradually approaches a third-person limited viewpoint. Moreover, because of Elizabeth's greater reliability, her control is more complete than Catherine's in Northanger Abbey since a separate narrator need not be present to dwell on her faults or weaknesses.

The emphasis on Elizabeth as the central intelligence is stressed as several times the third-person version of another person's speech is presented as if it were passing through the consciousness of Elizabeth. For instance, when Mrs. Bennet is expounding upon her hopes for Jane and Bingley's marriage, her words are presented as filtering through the mind of Elizabeth: ". . . it was so pleasant at her time of life to be able to consign her single daughters

to the care of their sister, that she might not be obliged to go into company more than she liked." (page 99) This technique is even more prevalent in Pride and Prejudice than it was in Northanger Abbey and serves to emphasize the role of the heroine while minimizing the roles of the other characters without resorting to direct narrator comment to accomplish this.

Very rarely is Elizabeth not "on stage" in the novel. The only discussions that take place in the novel without the presence of Elizabeth, once she is established as the central figure, are those where the Bingley sisters are criticizing her. When Elizabeth walks the three miles to be with her ill sister, she is mercilessly scorned for her indifference to decorum. When she leaves the room, the Bingley sisters agree that her manners are bad and that she has "no conversation, no stile, no taste, no beauty. . . ." (page 35) The next time Elizabeth leaves the room she is again criticized by Miss Bingley with the statement, "Eliza Bennet is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own. . . ." (page 40) And finally, after a visit by the Gardiners and Elizabeth to Pemberley, Miss Bingley once again criticizes Elizabeth's person, behavior, and dress. It seems that Miss Austen is insistent upon the reader fully realizing the Bingley sisters' despicable qualities of conceit and

jealousy. Thus, although the reader does realize these qualities through Elizabeth's penetration of the sisters' façade, the author, perhaps distrusting her artistry, continues to have them emphasize these qualities by their private biting comments.

By revealing characters through the viewpoint of Elizabeth, the author avoids direct exposition and makes the reader feel that he is taking part in an actual present experience without the interference of an authorial guide. Howard Babb comments on this, saying that Jane Austen engages the reader alongside the vivacious Elizabeth Bennet in making out a number of characters largely on the basis of what they say or do in public.<sup>1</sup> This appears to be true, as much of the character delineation is accomplished through Elizabeth when the point of view becomes hers "not only physically but psychically."<sup>2</sup>

The large amount of character delineation accomplished through the use of Elizabeth as central intelligence with the resulting lessening of the role of the narrator as a separate person may be viewed in this novel through the examination of the thought-process of Elizabeth. Thus, the

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<sup>1</sup>Howard S. Babb, Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>E. M. Halliday, "Narrative Perspective in Pride and Prejudice," NCF, XV (June, 1960), 67.

Bingley sisters, Collins, and Elizabeth's family are revealed most reliably through Elizabeth. The Bingley sisters are revealed as Elizabeth's dislike for them is stressed. The reader is informed that Elizabeth ". . . was very little disposed to approve them." (page 15) Confidence in Elizabeth's judgment is strengthened by her accurate evaluation of Collins. She informs Jane that he is "a conceited, pompous, narrow-minded, silly man. . . ." Just as the direct comment of the narrator is not needed for this statement, so it is not necessary for the revelation that Collins has chosen Elizabeth. Prior to the proposal, the reader is informed that "it now first struck her that she was selected from among her sisters as worthy of being the mistress of Hunsford Parsonage. . . ." (page 88)

Much about Elizabeth and her family is also learned through this reported-thought process as her feelings of mortification concerning the actions of her parents and sisters are revealed. When Mrs. Bennet is audibly expounding upon her expectations of the marriage of Bingley and Jane, Elizabeth blushes with shame and vexation and endeavors in vain to check the rapidity of her mother's words. Later, when Mary is convinced to oblige the company with her singing, Elizabeth is in agony as she feels Mary's powers are by no means worthy of such a display. When she finishes her second song, Mr. Bennet informs her that she has delighted the

audience long enough, and Elizabeth is sorry for her father's speech. This then is the type of subtle character delineation that the author is able to accomplish without the aid of an authorial guide by establishing Elizabeth as a reliable observer.

Another advantage of this perspective is revealed as it is through this confidence in Elizabeth that the author manages to deceive both Elizabeth and the reader concerning Wickham. Wickham is judged by Elizabeth to be pleasing and sincere. With no comment to the contrary by a separate narrator, the reader trusts her judgment and feels the same admiration for him.

The most important thoughts revealed, however, are those that deal with Elizabeth's feelings towards Darcy. The reader must be shown her changing attitude towards Darcy in order to make their final union believable. The author accomplishes this not by narrator comment but by a concentration on the thoughts of Elizabeth which pertain to this transforming attitude. It is in this manner that the author skillfully reveals what is referred to by Reuben Brower as the "beautifully graded progress of feeling, from 'hatred' or any 'dislike' to 'respect' to 'esteem' to 'gratitude' and a 'real interest' in Darcy's 'welfare' . . . ."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Reuben A. Brower, "The Controlling Hand: Jane Austen and Pride and Prejudice," Scrutiny, XIII (September, 1945), 107.

This revealing of Elizabeth's attitude begins with the revealing of her dislike for Darcy following his proposal. To her, it seems incredible that he should have been in love with her for so many months and that he would marry her in spite of all the objections which had made him prevent his friend's marrying her sister; however, her reflections on his pride, his shameless avowal of what he had done concerning Jane, and his cruelty towards Wickham soon overcome her pity for him. (page 193) Following this, Elizabeth receives the letter from Darcy and a whole chapter is devoted to her mental reactions to it. She censures herself, saying,

Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. (page 208)

Thus, direct narrator comment is not necessary as Elizabeth is perceptive enough to realize the truth and the extent to which she has erred.

The next time that Elizabeth's thoughts concerning Darcy are revealed is when she visits Pemberley. When she views the Pemberley House, she thinks, "And of this place, I might have been mistress!" (page 246) She is then impressed by the extraordinary praise of Darcy's housekeeper who states that she has never had a cross word from him in his life. Her changing sentiments are later revealed as Darcy appears and makes civil inquiries about her family. He requests to meet

her companions, and she feels consoled that he is learning that she has some relatives for whom there is no need to blush. (page 255)

Again, an outside narrator is not needed to explain Elizabeth's feelings for Darcy as she analyzes them thus:

She certainly did not hate him. No; hatred had vanished long ago, and she had almost as long been ashamed of ever feeling a dislike against him, that could be so called. . . there was a motive within her of good will which could not be overlooked. It was gratitude. Gratitude. . . for loving her still well enough, to forgive all the petulance and acrimony of her manner in rejecting him, and all the unjust accusations accompanying her rejections. (page 265)

She feels that he must possess an ardent love for her because she does not know to what else she can attribute such a change in a man of such pride; however, she does not at this point admit to a love for him.

She first admits of a love for him when she hears of Lydia's folly and believes Darcy lost to her because of such a proof of family weakness. The distress seems to her to be calculated to make her understand her own weaknesses, and "never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be in vain." (page 278) She further admits to herself that the proposals she so proudly refused four months ago would now have been gladly and gratefully received.

Thus, Elizabeth's taking over as the third-person limited narrator further proves highly successful as her

gradual change from hate to love of Darcy is displayed in the best manner with hardly any explicit narrator comment to destroy the immediacy.

It is also made obvious without the aid of a separate narrator that the improvement of both Elizabeth and Darcy has made their union possible. In The World of the Victorian Novel William Marshall comments on the excellence of this method whereby the author has Darcy and Elizabeth begin in an opposition which emphasizes the characteristic fault of each, but end united through mutual modification.<sup>1</sup> Robert Fox echoes this idea with the comment that the pride of Darcy and the vanity of Elizabeth are transformed into virtues by the absorption of a share of the opposite quality.<sup>2</sup>

Although most of the material important to the plot is revealed through Elizabeth, she is not the only character whose thoughts are revealed as Catherine Morland was in Northanger Abbey. The author seems to substitute the privilege of seeing into the minds of more than one character for the loss of a commenting authorial guide.

Darcy is the other major character whose thoughts are frequently revealed. This is true, however, only in the first

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<sup>1</sup>William H. Marshall, The World of the Victorian Novel (South Brunswick: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1967), p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Fox, "Elizabeth Bennet: Prejudice or Vanity," NCF, XVII (September, 1962), 187.



eighteen chapters. In the remaining fifty-three chapters, only Elizabeth's viewpoint on their romance is given. The reason for this is that in the early part of the book the reader must somehow be informed that Darcy is falling in love with Elizabeth. These hints are then presented by revealing Darcy's thoughts: ". . . no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes" (page 23), and "He began to wish to know more of her. . . ." (page 24) When Jane and Elizabeth are at Netherfield, the reader is informed that Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by Elizabeth and that he believed that if it "were not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger" (page 52), and again, a little later, "He began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention." (page 58) When it is announced that Jane has recovered and that she and Elizabeth will be leaving Netherfield the next day, Darcy receives it as welcome intelligence because Elizabeth attracts him more than he likes. He resolves to be careful that no signs of admiration escape him and, steady to his purpose, scarcely speaks ten words to her all day. (page 60) A final hint of his regard for Elizabeth is given in Chapter Eighteen when at the ball at

Netherfield "in Darcy's breast there was a tolerable powerful feeling towards her. . . ." (page 94)

Since the foreshadowing of Darcy's proposal has at this point been accomplished, the thoughts of Darcy are no longer revealed. Darcy's feelings are henceforth revealed only insofar as they are viewed by Elizabeth. Through the utilization of this technique, the author is able to have his proposal to Elizabeth in the thirty-fourth chapter shock not only Elizabeth but also the reader.

Although the thoughts of Elizabeth and Darcy are the most important ones revealed for the progression of the plot, occasionally thoughts of other characters are revealed. In The Mirror in the Roadway Frank O'Connor stresses that the story is not told solely from the viewpoint of Elizabeth but rather the narrator moves in and out of the minds of most of the characters.<sup>1</sup> Although this revealing of the thoughts of several characters is rare, it does occur occasionally in this novel as may be seen in a paragraph such as the following one on the preparations for the Netherfield Ball:

Mrs. Bennet. . . was particularly flattered by receiving the invitation from Mr. Bingley himself. . . . Jane pictured to herself a happy evening in the society of her two friends, and the attentions of their brother; and Elizabeth thought with pleasure of dancing a great deal with Mr. Wickham. . . . The happiness

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<sup>1</sup>Frank O'Connor, The Mirror in the Roadway (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 28.

anticipated by Catherine and Lydia depended less on any single event, or any particular person, for though they each, like Elizabeth, meant to dance half the evening with Mr. Wickham, he was by no means the only partner who could satisfy them. . . . And even Mary could assure her family that she had no disinclination for it. (pages 86-87)

Generally the author uses this technique of revealing several characters' thoughts when it is not possible or appropriate for those characters to relate them to anyone at that time. For example, the thoughts of Collins are revealed as the reader is informed that he has decided to choose one of the Bennet girls for his wife if they prove to be as handsome and amiable as they are represented to be by common report. (page 70) When he is refused by Elizabeth, his rationalizing is revealed as, meditating in solitude, he decides that his regard for her was quite imaginary. (page 112) In the same way, Charlotte's designs upon Collins, which could not be revealed to another person, are set forth as her thoughts. The reader is informed that the object of Charlotte's kindness was nothing less than to secure Elizabeth from any return of Collins's addresses by engaging them towards herself. (page 121) Her rationalization of the acceptance of his hand is further revealed by presenting her thoughts. This technique, then, of viewing events and characters from what Cynthia Griffin refers to as a "multiplicity of vantages"<sup>1</sup> is used sparingly and, although it may weaken the

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<sup>1</sup>Cynthia Griffin, "The Development of Realism in Jane Austen's Early Novels," ELH, XXX (March, 1963), 49.

illusion of reality, it strengthens character delineation by allowing the author to grant the reader knowledge of feelings which could not be revealed through Elizabeth alone.

In Pride and Prejudice the author capitalizes on two other character delineation devices which were not present in Northanger Abbey, and which further enable her to function without the direct exposition of the narrator. One of these is the dance motif. Much of the dialogue in the early chapters concentrates on dancing, and in chapter three the narrator comments, "To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love." (page 9) The implications of all the talk about dancing are thus revealed as it is shown to be closely related to marriage. The contrast between Darcy and Bingley is then emphasized as, at the first dance, Bingley dances every dance while Darcy dances only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley. (page 11) In light of the narrator's statement on being fond of dancing, the implication is that Bingley is taking the step towards falling in love whereas Darcy has not yet found a suitable partner. Darcy remarks that Bingley is dancing with the only handsome girl in the room. (page 11) At the next ball, Sir William Lucas recommends Elizabeth to Darcy as a partner, but Elizabeth refuses, fearing that he will think that she walked that way just to beg a partner. (page 26) "They do not really know each other, and they cannot dance together--or

marry--until they do."<sup>1</sup> In "Jane Austen and the Dance of Fidelity and Complaisance," Langdon Elsbree indicates that the various dances have also established the contrast between the agitated rhythm of Elizabeth's relation with Darcy and the complacent rhythm of Jane's relation with Bingley.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, with much having been revealed through the dance in a brief span of time, the author allows the dance motif to culminate with the Netherfield Ball, and it is then dropped as a major means of characterization.

The other technique used frequently by Miss Austen for character delineation in Pride and Prejudice is the letter. Twenty-one times throughout the novel, the letter is used to convey information.<sup>3</sup> The most important letter is, of course, the one from Darcy to Elizabeth in which he explains the two offences Elizabeth has accused him of upon his proposal to her--one, that he had detached Bingley from Jane; and, the other, that he had ruined the immediate prosperity and blasted the prospects of Wickham. It would have been incongruent for the character, Darcy, to relay this

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<sup>1</sup>Sister M. St. Francis Woods, "Jane Austen and the Omniscient Narrative Voice" (unpublished Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1965), p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Langdon Elsbree, "Jane Austen and the Dance of Fidelity and Complaisance," NCF, XV (September, 1960), 120-121.

<sup>3</sup>Woods, op. cit., p. 67.

information in person. The use of the letter in this case also has the advantage that Elizabeth may then be allowed to return to it a number of times and re-examine its contents as well as her attitude towards Darcy.

Another very important letter is the one from Mrs. Gardiner explaining Darcy's part in the marriage settlement of Wickham and Lydia. This letter allows the actions of Darcy concerning this settlement to be exposed without shifting the scene away from Elizabeth. The information is thus revealed by a reliable source without the necessity of explicit narrator comment.

With the novel, Pride and Prejudice, then, Miss Austen has taken an important step forward in the development of her artistry. In this novel the narrator is no longer an ironic commentator who has the freedom to break into narrative and expound her beliefs, to address the reader directly, or to make statements about the characters of her creation. Instead, in Pride and Prejudice the narrator, according to Ian Watt, acts as "a dispassionate analyst."<sup>1</sup> She appears in propria persona only occasionally to relate various facts about the characters or to set the scene. There is, furthermore, no explicit moralizing by the narrator, yet the moral

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 297.

evaluations are clear. As Helen Sanders states, Elizabeth learns that just judgments must be rationally rather than emotionally grounded, and that moral character must be estimated not from the charms of physical appearance but from the knowledge of the realities of behavior.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Austen's personal concern over the lack of exposition is revealed as she comments to Cassandra in a letter of February 4, 1813:

The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter, of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparte, or anything that would form a contrast to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style.<sup>2</sup>

However, what she considers a defect and facetiously suggests solutions for is probably what most readers consider an asset. The frequent dialogue keeps the story moving, and the lack of chapters of pure exposition by the narrator makes possible the maintenance of immediacy.

For the loss of the authorial guide, however, Miss Austen successfully substitutes the privilege of sparingly displaying a multiplicity of viewpoints as she allows the reader to be informed of the thoughts of several characters.

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<sup>1</sup>Sanders, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>2</sup>William Austen Leigh and Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh, Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters (second edition; New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 262.

The character delineation is thus improved as the revelation of various discussions and of various people's thoughts allows the characters to be mutually illuminating. This type of revelation also has the advantage that the author may present or withhold as much or as little as she wishes about a given character, or she may purposely present a false impression as is done with Wickham.

In the early chapters, the author freely shifts the revealing of thoughts between Darcy and Elizabeth; however, once it is firmly established that Darcy is falling in love with Elizabeth, the thoughts revealed are almost exclusively Elizabeth's. Thus in Pride and Prejudice the concentration on Elizabeth and the resulting lessening of the need for direct exposition grant improved immediacy as the reader has the feeling that he is taking part in an actual present experience.



## CHAPTER IV

### PERSUASION

Persuasion is the crowning achievement of Miss Austen's career. In this novel, which Andrew Wright refers to as "a sad love story with a happy ending,"<sup>1</sup> Miss Austen is closer than ever in thought and feeling to her heroine, Anne Elliot. Robert Liddell makes a strong case for this similarity between Jane Austen and her heroine. He states that their attitudes toward love and much of their experience are identical:

Each had loved and lost and had courageously hidden her grief; each was left with an ideal though she had recovered from most of the peculiar attachment; each was naturally fastidious (and the more so from once having seen a man whom she could love); each lived in too narrow a circle to be likely to form a second attachment; each rejected the proposals of a most eligible man but might possibly have formed new ties had circumstances been propitious and neither did.<sup>2</sup>

How relevant these similarities were in determining the viewpoint, of course, is impossible to ascertain; however, the fact remains that Anne is presented as a thoroughly reliable, perceptive heroine. She possesses benevolence, integrity,

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Wright, Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Structure (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Liddell, The Novels of Jane Austen (Great Britain: Longmans, Green and Company, Ltd., 1963), pp. 133-134.

and intelligence. She is six years older than Elizabeth or Catherine, the heroines of the two novels previously examined, and she has undergone eight years of growth through the understanding of her past mistake. Thus, the correctives of vision are not needed as Anne sees accurately, justly and sensitively.

Stressing this mature point of view, in their book Speaking of Jane Austen, Sheila Smith and G. B. Stern state that most "Janeites" like Persuasion for its depth of feeling, its tenderness, its suggestion of true love in contrast to the more conventionally romantic love affairs of the other novels, its atmosphere of tenderness, of autumn, of decline, and for its captivating and amiable heroine, Anne Elliot.<sup>1</sup> The emotions are therefore differently pitched--they are the emotions of maturity, of intelligence, of a gentle disillusioned heart. W. A. Craik echoes these statements concerning the maturity of Anne, saying that in Persuasion Jane Austen agrees with her heroine much more than she ever had before because Anne has really no faults--no prejudices to mislead her as did Elizabeth.<sup>2</sup>

Anne, furthermore, is characterized more by what she thinks than what she does. Jane Austen is concerned with

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<sup>1</sup>Sheila Kaye Smith and G. B. Stern, Speaking of Jane Austen (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944), p. 280.

<sup>2</sup>W. A. Craik, Jane Austen: The Six Novels (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1965), p. 167.

states of mind aroused by events rather than the events themselves. Craik feels that with this novel she is moving toward a more introspective type of writing, towards a study of the individual and of his moral growth within himself rather than within his society.<sup>1</sup>

In Miss Austen's previous novels there were many breaks in point of view because the various heroines' beclouded minds could not do the whole job. However, in Persuasion the heroine's viewpoint is faulty only in her ignorance of Captain Wentworth's love; therefore, there are few breaks. Furthermore, the reader is less conscious of point of view because it is so subtly integrated with other elements.

In this novel the narrator is present in person for the first three chapters which comprise the prologue and for the last chapter consisting of epilogue. In the remaining sections her presence is very infrequent and very subtly handled. Consequently, once the ethical and intellectual framework has been established by the narrator's introduction, the preliminary setting has been economically sketched in, and the characters introduced, the reader enters Anne's consciousness and remains bound to it.

In the prologue Miss Austen uses a very economical method of setting the stage. Sir Elliot reads a page from the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

Baronetage which informs the reader concerning his marriage, his wife's death, the birth of his three daughters, and the marriage of the youngest of the three. The reader is then informed by the narrator that Sir Walter Elliot possesses extreme vanity of person and of situation and that he is a conceited, silly father.<sup>1</sup>

The narrator then describes Lady Russell as a widower, an intimate friend of the Elliots, a person of steady character, and one who is quite wealthy. When she is consulted about the Elliots' financial distress, the reader is informed that she is a woman of sound abilities, of strict integrity, and of benevolence. She is capable of strong attachments, most correct in her conduct, and strict in her notions of decorum. Liddell remarks that Lady Russell plays the part of Peitho, the goddess of Persuasion,<sup>2</sup> while Joseph Duffy calls her a "fairy godmother manqué."<sup>3</sup>

Following brief introductions of the three daughters and William Walter Elliot, Esq., two other characters are introduced by a statement by the narrator and then are further delineated by the comments of others. The narrator describes Mrs. Clay as a clever young woman who understands

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<sup>1</sup>R. W. Chapman (ed.), The Novels of Jane Austen (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), V, 3-5. All subsequent references to the text of Persuasion refer to the second half of Volume V, Third Edition of this series edited by Chapman.

<sup>2</sup>Liddell, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph M. Duffy, "Structure and Idea in Jane Austen's Persuasion," NCF, VIII (March, 1954), 273.

the art of pleasing, at least at Kellynch-hall. She however, is revealed more thoroughly by other characters' reactions as Lady Russell considers her an unequal and a very dangerous companion for Elizabeth. (pages 15-16) Admiral Croft, the reader is informed, is a native of Somersetshire and has acquired a very handsome fortune. The remainder of the delineation is handled by other characters' comments. For example, Anne states that he is rear admiral of the white, was in the Trafalgar action, and has been in the East Indies for several years, and Mr. Shepherd further relates that Admiral Croft is very hale, hearty, and well-looking and quite a gentleman in all his notions and behavior. (pages 21-22)

The summarizing privileges of the narrator are also emphasized as the third person is used in the relating of Sir Elliot's feelings concerning their financial distress rather than the direct first person of dialogue:

Lady Russell's /requisitions/ had no success at all-- could not be put up with--were not to be borne. "What! Every comfort of life knocked off! Journeys, London, servants, horses, table,--contractions and restrictions every where. To live no longer with the decencies even of a private gentleman! No, he would sooner quit Kellynch-hall at once, than remain in it on such disgraceful terms." (page 13)

Mr. Shepherd's reply to this is given in the same manner:

Mr. Shepherd. . .was perfectly persuaded that nothing would be done without a change of abode.--"Since the idea had been started in the very quarter which ought to dictate, he had no scruple," he said, "in confessing his judgment to be entirely on that side." (page 13)

The reader is then informed that there had been three alternatives concerning where to move--London, Bath, or another house in the country. Bath was decided upon. These circumstances being summarized, it is then possible to relate the present dialogue concerning a possible tenet for Kellynch-hall. Most of the remaining summaries are presented through Anne.

Finally, in the last chapter the summarization is again turned over to the narrator with the comment, "Who can be in doubt of what followed?" (page 248) However, the epilogue retains a tone consonant with the rest of the work.

Granting the passage of time is again indicative of the narrator's presence; however, in Persuasion the reader feels that the passage of time is handled through Anne's generalizations rather than through the will of an outside narrator. For example, during Anne's visit with her sister, the reader is informed that they visited the Musgroves frequently, and often the evening would end in an unpremeditated little ball and Anne would play country-dances by the hour. The reader is informed, "So passed the first three weeks. Michaelmas came; and now Anne's heart must be in Kellynch again." (page 47) This relating of the time passage to things directly concerning Anne makes it appear as though the time passage is through her granting of it rather than through an outside narrator's wish. The same situation concerning the passage of time occurs later in the novel when Anne

visits Kellynch-hall. The reader is informed, "The first three or four days passed most quietly." Then Anne is asked by Lady Russell to visit Mrs. Croft. (page 125) Again, the time passage is related to Anne, thus avoiding the intrusion of a separate narrator.

At the conclusion of Chapter Three, the narration is basically turned over to Anne with the comment, ". . . a few months more and he, perhaps, may be walking here." (page 25) The next chapter explains that "he" is Captain Wentworth. Anne Elliot then becomes the "eye of the novel" or what Edd Parks refers to as "the focal unity," a sensitive central intelligence with "a tough inner core, a subtle comprehension and an intelligence that. . . the livelier heroines did not surpass."<sup>1</sup>

In much of the next few chapters it is impossible to ascertain whether the narrator is speaking as a separate person or whether she is speaking through Anne. Since Anne is reliable there is no need to emphasize material as being her thoughts rather than a separate narrator's. The tone is so similar that at times it appears that a revelation is through Anne; however, it later proves to be coming from a separate narrator. For example the statement about Wentworth, "He was, at that time, a remarkably fine young man, with a great

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<sup>1</sup>Edd Winfield Parks, "Exegesis in Austen's Novels," The South Atlantic Quarterly, LI (January, 1952), 118.

deal of intelligence, spirit, and brilliancy. . ." (page 26) seems as though it is being revealed through Anne, but then continues, "and Anne an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste and feeling." The narration is thus identified as coming from someone other than Anne.

The concentration on Anne's introspection is further revealed as dialogue does not have quite the delineation power it did in Pride and Prejudice, where the mimetic mode was dominant. In Persuasion even Elizabeth and Sir Walter Elliot can manage to be quite civil in their speech when it is required of them; therefore, dialogue alone is not very revealing. Thus, in the prologue the characters are rather hurriedly described by the narrator, and the major purpose of the novel--the revealing of Anne's inner self--is begun.

Once Anne is established as the central intelligence, the narrator appears as a separate person only a very few times. Occasionally the narrator breaks into what appears to be the thinking of Anne to make a comment. For example, as the story of Captain Wentworth and Anne is being revealed, the narrator comments that Anne was "an extremely pretty girl with gentleness, modesty, taste, and feeling." (page 26) Later, Anne is described by the narrator: "Twelve years had changed Anne from the blooming, silent unformed girl of fifteen, to the elegant little woman of seven and twenty,



with every beauty excepting bloom. . . ." (page 153) Another time, the narrator compares the felicity of Elizabeth and Anne saying, ". . . the origin of one all selfish vanity, of the other all generous attachment." (page 185)

Parks states of the latter intrusion of the narrator that it is, as her others in this novel are, brief and appropriate and in fact hardly noticeable. He feels that the fact that it is hardly noticeable is the highest praise that can be given to any type of authorial intrusion.<sup>1</sup>

Only very rarely are the thoughts of anyone except Anne revealed once she is established as the central character. It seems almost in error when Elizabeth's thoughts concerning whether Mrs. Musgrove and her party ought to be asked to dine with them are revealed. The reader is informed that she could not bear to have the difference of style, the reduction of servants which a dinner must betray. (page 219)

Similarly, in contrast to the number of times Darcy's thoughts are revealed in Pride and Prejudice, the thoughts of Captain Wentworth in Persuasion are revealed only once. The reader must somehow be informed that Captain Wentworth believes himself indifferent to Anne so that the major movement of Persuasion--Anne's discovery that Wentworth still loves her--may take place. His feelings for Anne then are stated:

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<sup>1</sup>Parks, op. cit., p. 119.

She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. . . . He had no desire of meeting her again. Her power with him was gone for ever. (page 61)

Howard S. Babb notes that the narrator must take over for Anne when Captain Wentworth is introduced because he must be a firmly sympathetic character to have attracted Anne and must be kept so if they are to be finally united. The author is at great pains to accomplish this--even to the point of violating Anne's point of view.<sup>1</sup> Babb also points out that the point of view is located in a heroine whose misinterpretations necessary to keep the story going must never invalidate her significant intuitions. Therefore, the reader sees Anne interpreting Captain Wentworth's refusal to have breakfast in the same house with her as a desire on his part to avoid seeing her; and, when he takes the bothersome child from her, she tells herself that he does not comment because he has no desire to converse with her; and, finally, his act of encouraging her to ride in the carriage with Crofts, she interprets as negative kindness.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to the very few times that Anne's viewpoint is violated, the fact that the narration is being

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<sup>1</sup>Howard S. Babb, Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 205-206.

handled through Anne is made obvious several times. For example, when a conversation between Mary and Charles is revealed, it is clear that the viewpoint is Anne's as it is stated that Anne followed Mary upstairs and was in time for the whole conversation. (page 57)

Similarly, in a discussion with the Musgroves, the reader is told that for a few minutes Anne could not keep pace with the conversation of the others and thus it is not revealed. When she could then let her attention take its natural course again, the conversation is again revealed. Still another example occurs as Louisa and Captain Wentworth are having a conversation. It is stated that they were moving on. "Before they were beyond her [Anne's] hearing, however, Louisa spoke again," (page 88) and a brief conversation between Captain Wentworth and Louisa is then revealed. This is followed by the statement, "Anne distinguished no more." (page 89) And finally the revealing of only what Anne perceives is further stressed when Mrs. Croft and Mrs. Musgrove are talking and the reader is informed that, ". . . Anne heard nothing distinctly; it was only a buzz of words in her ear, her mind was in confusion." (page 231)

The fact that Anne has taken over as the central intelligence is further stressed by the use of the word "seemed" to allow the author to present the feelings of others without leaving the consciousness of Anne. At a

party Anne comments that no one seemed in higher spirits than Captain Wentworth. (page 71) She later comments that Charles's attentions to Henrietta had been observed and that she did seem to like him. (page 74) In describing Captain Benwick, she states that he seemed to be grateful for her interest. And finally, in describing William Walter Elliot when she first encounters him, Anne comments that he seemed about thirty, and, though not handsome, had an agreeable person. (page 105)

The action of the story is also very seldom removed from the viewpoint of Anne. At one point in the novel, the author removes Captain Wentworth from Anne and places him in consultation with Charles and Henrietta. This creates a situation where Captain Wentworth may comment upon his respect for Anne. In deciding who is to return to the Musgroves to inform them of Louisa's accident, Wentworth says that he and Henrietta will go inform them while Charles Musgrove and Anne stay with Louisa. He then states that Anne should stay because there is no one "so proper, so capable as Anne." (page 114)

Another instance where the story proceeds without Anne's presence occurs when Anne and Mr. Elliot walk away and the reader is informed of the conversation that transpires among the ladies of Captain Wentworth's party. The

ladies discuss Elliot's feelings concerning Anne and they comment that he is good-looking and agreeable. They then agree that Anne is very pretty and that they admire her more than Elizabeth. (page 177) Thus, the general public's feeling is revealed without any editorial comment by the narrator.

The tremendous perceptiveness of Anne which governs the novel and makes an outside narrator unnecessary is also displayed often. When Anne's father comments on Mrs. Clay's improved looks, in such unwarranted personal praise Anne sees her father's growing attachment to Mrs. Clay--something which the less-perceptive Elizabeth, who is much closer to the situation, does not see.

Her perceptiveness is further displayed as, in analyzing the relationship of Louisa and Captain Benwick, Anne wonders what "the high-spirited, joyous, talking Louisa Musgrove, and the dejected, thinking, feeling, reading Captain Benwick" have in common. She then concludes that it was the situation. The two were thrown together for several weeks and became dependent upon each other. She feels that any tolerably pleasing young woman who had listened and seemed to feel for him would have received tenderness since he had an affectionate heart and must love somebody. (pages 166-167)

The concentration on Anne is further stressed by the presentation of the third-person version of someone else's

speech as though it is filtering through Anne's mind, such as, "Elizabeth could not conceive how such an absurd suspicion should occur to her; and indignantly answered for each party's perfectly knowing their situation." (pages 34-35) Similarly, when Anne was to leave Uppercross, the third-person version appears, "What should they do without her. They were wretched comforters for one another." (page 122) Again, by putting this in the third person, the author makes the reader feel as though he is becoming acquainted with this as it filters through Anne's mind.

The generalizations of the novel are also presented primarily through Anne. When speaking of Mrs. Clay's personal defects, Anne generalizes, "There is hardly any personal defect which an agreeable manner might not gradually reconcile one to." (page 35) Later, when Charles and Mary are arguing, Anne comments, "Husbands and wives generally understand when opposition will be vain." (page 55) When speaking of her feelings about Lyme, Anne generalizes, "One does not love a place the less for having suffered in it, unless it has been all suffering. . . ." (page 184) She further states, "All the privilege I claim for my own sex . . . is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone." (page 235) Such generalizations as the latter two which hint of Anne's feelings for Wentworth are very important to the progression of the story.

Similarly, the few generalizations stated by Captain Wentworth have their source in his feelings for Anne. In speaking to Louisa, he states, ". . . let those who would be happy be firm," (page 88) referring obliquely to Anne's mistake in accepting the influence of others in making her decision against him. Later, in speaking of Benwick's love for Fanny Harville, he generalizes, "A man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart to such a woman!" (page 183) Both of these comments reveal to Anne, Wentworth's true feelings and beliefs.

As in Pride and Prejudice, letters play an important role in the novel as they allow the presentation of material through Anne. One letter in the novel communicates the news that William Walter Elliot is in Bath. This allows Anne to present her opinion that she would rather see Mr. Elliot again than not. (page 136) Another letter from Mary to Anne announces Captain Benwick and Louise Musgrove's engagement and again allows the emphasis to be on Anne and her reactions. The reader is informed that Anne had never in her life been more astonished and that she felt that it was almost too wonderful for belief and that it was with the greatest effort that she could remain in the room, preserve an air of calmness, and answer the common questions of the moment. (page 165) Still another letter serves to acquaint Anne with Mr. Elliot's feelings about Sir Walter and Elizabeth and to relate his concern about the possibility

of Sir Walter Elliot marrying again. This letter allows Anne to express her mortification at finding such disrespect shown for her father, and it allows the reader to witness Anne's changing feelings concerning William Walter Elliot. (page 203)

The major communication accomplished through a letter is, of course, Captain Wentworth's note to Anne expressing his true feelings for her. In the first version, which is included in A Memoir of Jane Austen, the revelation of these feelings is less credible as he attempts to express himself orally.<sup>1</sup> However, the expression by means of the more indirect way--a letter--makes more believable his statement that he has loved none but her and, unjust, weak, and resentful as he has been, he has not been inconstant. (page 237) It also allows the emphasis to be placed upon Anne and her reactions to it.

Moreover, two new dimensions are added to the characterization in Persuasion which further the author's ability to develop characters fully without the use of an editorially omniscient narrator. One of these is the juxtaposition of particularly three different groups of people at three different locations, Kellynch, Uppercross, and Lyme. The varied

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<sup>1</sup>James Edward Austen Leigh, A Memoir of Jane Austen (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1872), pp. 167-180.



social settings organize the characters. Craik comments on the steady development from the emotional aridity of Kellynch to the happy richness of Lyme.<sup>1</sup> Also, the minor characters, illustrating certain varieties of emotional experience, serve to provide a human background against which Anne may be displayed, and in this manner the overwhelming impression of Anne's being is created as her sensibility, open-heartedness, warm compassion for everybody, and her traditional morality are emphasized.

Residences are then described as an integral part of character delineation. First of all, at Kellynch the residents are shown to have every comfort of life but to be very vain and self-centered. The main inhabitants, Elizabeth and Sir Walter Elliot, are shown to have the conceit and vanity of the feudal remnant which is evidenced by the large number of mirrors in Sir Elliot's dressing room. The reader is then informed that this vanity is the beginning and end of Sir Walter Elliot's character, while Elizabeth is described as being very much like him. The superficiality, insincerity, egocentricity, and hypocrisy of Elizabeth and her father serve by means of contrast to emphasize Anne's opposite characteristics.

In describing Uppercross, Miss Austen again allows Anne to notice the objects that illustrate the characters

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<sup>1</sup>Craik, op. cit., p. 172.

rather than using an authorial guide. When Anne enters Mary's cottage, she notes the ". . . faded sofa of the pretty little drawingroom, the once elegant furniture of which had been gradually growing shabby, under the influence of four summers and two children. . . ." (page 37) The Great House of the Musgroves is described as being in a state of alteration. The "old-fashioned square parlour, with a small carpet and shining floor" contains the more modern, "a grand piano forte and a harp. . . flower-stands and little tables placed in every direction." (page 40)

The reader is further informed that the Musgroves, like their house, are in a state of alteration. He is also informed that the father and mother are in the old English style and the young people are in the new. (page 40) The Musgroves are then described as "a very good sort of people: friendly and hospitable, not much educated, and not at all elegant." (page 40) The reader is further informed that Anne always thought of the Musgrove children as some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance. (page 41) Thus, the Musgroves are shown to be more amiable and friendly than the Elliots, yet one sees much self-centeredness in the family. This again serves, by means of contrast, to emphasize the open-heartedness of Anne.

Finally, Lyme is given the most complimentary description, as Anne is most impressed with the Harvilles and Mr. Benwick. She speaks of the charms in the immediate environs of Lyme and the sweet retired bay, backed by dark cliffs where

fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide. She mentions the ". . . woody varieties of the cheerful village of Up Lyme and . . . Pinny with its green chasms between romantic rocks. . . ." She also describes the sands, the flowing of the tide, the fine south-easterly breeze, and the glory of the sea. (page 95)

At Lyme, Harvilles' house is described as being small and near the foot of an old pier. The reader is informed that the inside of the house has a few articles of rare species of wood with something curious and valuable from all the distant countries Captain Harville had visited. These are important to Anne because they present a picture of repose and domestic happiness. The complimentary physical descriptions are thus in accord with Anne's feelings concerning the Harvilles and Mr. Benwick as they are then described as being not very polished but friendly and pleasant people. Anne feels that there is a bewitching charm in the degree of hospitality so uncommon in invitations and dinners of formality and display. (page 98)

The Lyme residents are further revealed by the Lyme incident. Robert Liddell comments on the brilliant conjecture of Mrs. Lascelles that Louisa was meant to be thrown out of a gig which had been foreshadowed by Mrs. Croft's wanting to ride with the admiral even though she might be

overturned. Mrs. Lascelles states that Jane Austen was deflected from this purpose by remembering the death of her friend, Mrs. Lefroy, and her cousin, Jane Williams, in road accidents.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the circumstances, the Lyme incident, as written, becomes a touchstone of character, again allowing much to be revealed without a separate narrator. Here the open-heartedness and magnanimity of the people of Lyme are shown and Anne's good sense in the emergency is emphasized as the rest of the people are bewildered or faint in the crisis while Anne takes over.

In addition to the juxtaposing of various groups and their locations, a technique previously ignored in Jane Austen's work but used effectively in Persuasion is the description of the seasons to heighten the delineation of characters and to create a mood. Lord David Cecil comments that nature was not to Miss Austen as it was to the romantics, "the incarnation of some mysterious indwelling spirit, but rather a pleasant background to life, softening the heart and elevating the mind by its beauty and freshness and peace."<sup>2</sup> With the tone of Persuasion being graver

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<sup>1</sup>Liddell, op. cit., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Lord David Cecil, "A Note on Jane Austen's Scenery," The Fine Art of Reading and Other Literary Studies (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), pp. 130-131.

than that of her other works and the heroine being sad, lonely, and responsive to the soothing influence of nature, landscape plays a more important part than ever before. Similarly, in Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development, A Walton Litz notes that landscape has ceased to be a mere backdrop.<sup>1</sup>

The use of seasons is further stressed as Anne's early "loss of bloom" is continually presented through the image of autumn, while the reminder of spring acts as a hint of future happiness. This is shown as she wishes not to go to Bath because she dreads the heats of September in all the white glare of Bath and she grieves to forego "all the influence so sweet and so sad of all the autumnal months in the country." (page 33) She further attributes her pleasure in a walk to a view of "the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges." (page 84) She refers to the "sweet scenes of autumn" and recalls "some tender sonnet, fraught with the apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together. . . ." (page 85) Anne also notices ". . . the ploughs at work. . . meaning to have spring again. . . ." (page 85) which is then symbolic of her renewed hope and seeming youth.

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<sup>1</sup>A. Walton Litz, Jane Austen: A Study of Her Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 153.

Thus, the concentration on Anne as the third-person limited narrator is quite evident throughout the novel and is stronger than any concentration on a central figure in Miss Austen's earlier novels; moreover, there is some reason to believe that had Miss Austen had the opportunity to do more revising of Persuasion, she would have used even more exclusively the third-person limited viewpoint. Mudrick noted that Persuasion is Jane Austen's only novel which was never thoroughly revised. She wrote in March, 1817, that she had something ready for publication which might appear in about a year; however, she was at the time very ill and died four months later.<sup>1</sup> She did rewrite the twenty-second chapter in August, 1816.<sup>2</sup> In the original version, the Crofts and Captain Wentworth brought the denouement about.<sup>3</sup> B. C. Southam notes that the original version was a comedy scene and the circumstances of reunion were clumsy with the Crofts becoming sly matchmakers, while in the revised version the reunion was entirely changed and invested with tone and mood.<sup>4</sup> Louise Cohen writes that the revised version presents

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Liddell, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>3</sup>James Edward Austen-Leigh, op. cit., pp. 167-180.

<sup>4</sup>B. C. Southam, Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 88.

a far more gradual and circumstantial process of building toward a climactic moment,<sup>1</sup> while Litz notes that the final version sustains the internal point of view, allowing the reader to follow the turn of Anne's mind while the shorter draft had threatened to break this psychological consistency and collapse into straight summary.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Mudrick feels that the story perhaps would have been Anne's story from the beginning if the promised revision had been accomplished.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Persuasion presents a strong movement toward the third-person limited viewpoint which may possibly have been used even more exclusively had Miss Austen been granted the chance to make promised revisions. In this novel, as in none of Miss Austen's previous works, she virtually eliminates the editorially omniscient narrator. Because Anne possesses maturity, integrity, and intelligence, she is able to assume the responsibility of the reliable narrator; and because of this responsibility placed upon Anne, Miss Austen is able to improve her artistry. The character delineation is more complete in Persuasion as characters are revealed through Anne's perceptive mind. Furthermore, the feeling of immediacy and the illusion of reality are improved in Persuasion since the

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<sup>1</sup>Louise Cohen, "Insight and the Essence of Jane Austen's Artistry," NCF, VIII (December, 1953), 213.

<sup>2</sup>Litz, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>3</sup>Mudrick, op. cit., p. 219.

intrusions of an outside narrator are infrequent and subtle. It seems then that Miss Austen is most successful when she can mirror her feelings through a strong central intelligence as she does with Anne in Persuasion.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The mode of narration used by Miss Austen may be viewed as parallel to the changing narrative perspective employed by novelists in general from the eighteenth century to the present. This is shown by the progression of the mode of narration from the early type which included a strong omniscient narrator as in Northanger Abbey through a stage where the omniscient narrator becomes less important as the point of view shifts between major characters as in Pride and Prejudice toward more of a third-person limited narrator as in Persuasion.

The mode of narration used by Miss Austen is always consistent with the type of heroine in a given novel. Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey is immature and unreliable and too weak to assume the burden of central intelligence; therefore, the role of the omniscient narrator is important. In Pride and Prejudice Elizabeth Bennet offers a point of view so that in the end it may be proven prejudiced; thus, it is necessary to reveal the thoughts and views of others. However, when Miss Austen creates a responsible, reliable central intelligence such as Anne Elliot in Persuasion, very little narrator comment is needed.

In her early novels Miss Austen sacrifices the illusion of reality and the feeling of immediacy for the sake of satire while in later novels she uses dramatic motivation, letting her characters and conflicts be developed through action rather than through authorial comment. Also, in Persuasion Miss Austen is closely attentive to personal feeling and economic tensions for the first time. She has discarded the shield of irony, and the moral vision has become a more integral part of the story.

Concerning the concentration in Persuasion on Anne's introspection and upon the revealing of her personality, Virginia Woolf states that she feels that Jane Austen would have trusted even more to reflection in future novels to give the reader knowledge of her characters. She further speculates on the novels that Jane Austen did not live to write, saying, "She would have been the forerunner of Henry James and of Proust. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Much of Miss Austen's success can certainly be attributed to her knowledge of human nature and her ability to relate the events of life in minute detail. The closer Miss Austen comes to the third-person limited type of narration which she employs in Persuasion, the more successful her

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<sup>1</sup>Virginia Woolf, "Jane Austen," Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, Ian Watt, editor (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 23-24.

novels are in revealing this remarkable insight into human nature. Thus, the development of her artistic talent through the various viewpoints to this final stage seems to represent a continual advancement of her art.

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